

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-8, 12, 17, 19 are amended, claims 26-30 are added, claims 3, 10, 14, 16 and 25 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer; and as a result, claims 1-2, 5-9, 11-13, 15, 17-24 and 26 are now pending in this application.

No new matter is believed proposed.

Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found, for example, at least at page 4 paragraphs 2 and 4. The first two lines of paragraph 2 state that the latching member is formed as a separate part to a body of the slider. The first line of paragraph 4 states that the slider is formed in two parts, i.e., the latch body portion is integrally formed with the latching member thereon. Further basis is found, for example, in the last two lines of the last paragraph on page 12, which state that the puller can be replaced by temporarily removing the latch body portion 90, 92.

Claims 1 and 4-8 were objected to based on informalities. Claims 1, and 5-8 are amended to clarify the claim by addressing the informality related to the phrase "latch body." Applicant thanks the examiner for pointing out these informalities. These claim amendments are not made in response to any rejection and do not narrow the claim scope.

New claim 26 includes the subject matter of claim 22, which was indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

New claim 29 includes the subject matter of claim 8, which was indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

With regard to the specification being objected to as not providing antecedent basis for claim 4, applicant cancels claim 4 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant makes no admission as the appropriateness of this objection and cancels this claim to move the application to allowance.

With regard to the specification being objected to as not enabling claims 10 and 25, applicant cancels claims 10 and 25 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant makes no admission as the appropriateness of this objection and cancels these claims to move the application to allowance.

Claim 12 is amended to clarify the language therein. Specifically, the phrase “so unlatching the sliders” is replaced with the phrase “to unlatch the first and second sliders” to clarify the claim.

Claims 3, 4 and 14 are cancelled in response to the Claim Rejections of pages 5 to 7. Claims 10 and 25 are cancelled in response to the Examiner's objection at the top of page 3 of the Office Action.

Claim 16 has been incorporated into claim 12, and the word "removably" has been inserted in the last line. Similarly, claim 17 has been amended by inserting the word "removably" in the last line.

Specification Objections

The Office Action at page 2 objects to the incorporation by reference of the EP-A-1300093 and EP-A-1300093 as being improper incorporation of essential material. Applicant respectfully traverses. Applicant understands that an application as filed must be complete in itself. However, material nevertheless may be incorporated by reference. The Office Action appears to indicate that the “essential material” missing from the present specification relates to claims 10 and 25. These claims are canceled. Accordingly, there is no purported “essential material” missing from the present specification. Accordingly, the applicant is allowed to incorporate by reference applications published by foreign countries or regional patent offices. MPEP § 608.01.

The Office Action at page 2 objects to the specification as lacking antecedent basis for the subject matter of claim 4. Applicant amends the specification, as set forth above, to include the language of originally filed claim 4 with reference numbers. It is well settled that a claim as originally filed can provide its own disclosure or “antecedent basis.” No new matter is proposed as the language added to page 12 of the specification was part of the originally filed specification. Withdrawal of this objection to the specification is requested.

§112 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 10 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as lacking adequate description or enablement. Applicant cancels claims 10 and 25 without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, this rejection is now moot.

Claims 12, 13, 15, 16 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for indefiniteness. Applicant respectfully traverses. All of these claims are believed to be definite as originally filed. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections is requested.

§102 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1, 3-6, 9, 17-21, 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for anticipation by Williams (U.S. Patent No. 2,621, 387). Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claim 1, as amended, recites, among other things, “a latch body portion integrally formed with the latching member, the latch body portion being removably mounted on the slider body portion.” Applicant can not find these features in Williams. For example, the latch body of Williams is not removable mounted on the slider body. As all of the features of claim 1 are not found in Williams, applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims 5, 6 and 9.

Claims 3-4 are canceled without prejudice. Accordingly, the rejection thereof is now moot.

Claim 17, as amended, recites, among other things, “a surface body portion removably mounted on an upper surface of the slider body portion.” Applicant can not find these features in Williams. For example, the latch body of Williams is not removable mounted on the slider body. As all of the features of claim 17 are not found in Williams, applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection of claim 17 and its dependent claims 18-21, and 23-24.

Claims 1-7, 9, 11-21, 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for anticipation by German Patent document No. DE 299 16 218 U1 (herein “DE’218”), cited by applicant. Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claim 1, as amended, recites, among other things, “a latch body portion integrally formed with the latching member, the latch body portion being removably mounted on the slider body portion.” Applicant can not find these features in DE’218. For example, the latch body of DE’218 is not integrally formed with the latching member. As all of the features of claim 1 are not found in DE’218, applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims 2, 5-7, 9 and 11.

Claims 3-4 are canceled without prejudice. Accordingly, the rejection thereof is now moot.

Claim 12, as amended, recites, among other things, “wherein one of the first or second sliders comprises a slider body portion slidable on the stringers and a latch body portion integrally formed with the first or second latching member, the latch body portion being formed separately from and removably attached to the slider body portion.” Applicant can not find these features in DE’218. For example, the latch body of DE’218 is not integrally formed with the latching member. As all of the features of claim 12 are not found in DE’218, applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection of claim 12 and its dependent claims 13 and 15.

Claim 17, as amended, recites, among other things, “a surface body portion removably mounted on an upper surface of the slider body portion.” Applicant can not find these features in DE’218. For example, the latch body of DE’218 is not integrally formed with the latching member. As all of the features of claim 17 are not found in DE’218, applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection of claim 17 and its dependent claims 18-21, 23 and 24.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 22 was indicated to be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. § 112 set forth in the Office Action.

New claim 26 include the subject matter of claim 22, which was indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Claim 8 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

New claim 29 includes the subject matter of claim 8, which was indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance, and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney at (612) 349-9587 to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

Respectfully submitted,

VINCENT LEVA ET AL.

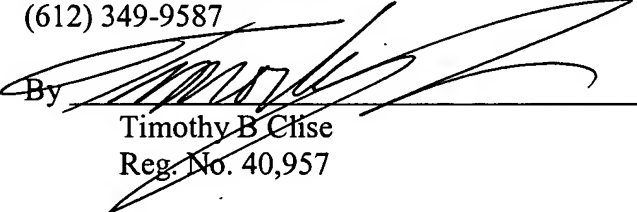
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24 Aug '05

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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 24th day of August, 2005.

CANDIS BUENDING

Name

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